

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 9256

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR FIRST PARAGRAPH

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, TU

SUBJ: ABBOTT LABORATORIES' INTEREST IN POPPY STRAW PROCESSING
PLANT IN TURKEY

SUMMARY. ABBOTT OFFICIALS ARE INTERESTED IN POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION
IN POPPY STRAW PROCESSING PLANT IN TURKEY.

THEY PLAN DISCUSS WITH AMBASSADOR VANCE POSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING
ASSURANCE THAT SUCH PARTICIPATION IS NOT CONTRARY TO USG POLICY.
THEY ARE ALSO INTERESTED IN REMOVAL OF RESTRICTION ON IMPORTATION
INTO US OF PROCESSED OPIUM ALKALOIDS. END SUMMARY.

1. W.D. MOSELEY, VICE PRESIDENT, ABBOTT UNIVERSAL, NORTH CHICAGO,
ILLINOIS, AND G. NELSON, ABBOTT REP, ISTANBUL, CALLED ON AMBASSADOR
NOV 26 TO DISCUSS ABBOTT'S INTEREST IN SOME TYPE OF PARTICIPATION IN
POPPY STRAW PROCESSING PLANT IN TURKEY WHICH IS NOW BEING CONSIDERED
BY GOT. ABBOTT OFFICIALS SAID THEY BELIEVE THEY CAN OFFER THE MOST
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TECHNICALLY ADVANCED AND MOST EFFICIENT TYPE OF PLANT FOR EXTRACTION

OF ALKALOIDS FROM POPPY STRAW. THIS WOULD BE BASED ON THEIR EXPERIENCE WITH OPERATION OF PLANT IN TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA (BASED ON POLISH PROCESS). TWO OFFICIALS FROM TASMANIAN PLANT NOW CURRENTLY IN ISTANBUL COLLECTING DATA THAT CAN BE USED IN PREPARATION OF ABBOTT PROPOSAL TO GOT. US FIRM IS PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE IN VARIOUS WAYS IN PROPOSED TURKISH PLANT, I.E., PLANT DESIGN, TECHNOLOGY, OR MANAGEMENT. MOSELEY SAID ABBOTT MIGHT WISH, FOR PROPRIETARY REASONS, TO HOLD MINORITY INTEREST, POSSIBLY 25 PERCENT, IN PLANT IF AGREEABLE TO GOT. HE RECOGNIZED TURKISH PLANT COULD NOT BE IN OPERATION WHEN INITIAL CROP OF POPPY STRAW WOULD BE HARVESTED IN SUMMER 1975 AND THAT

GOT OFFICIALS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT ABILITY TO FIND MARKET FOR POPPY STRAW FROM FIRST HARVEST. ABBOTT WOULD BE PREPARED TO PURCHASE ENTIRE TURKISH HARVEST IN FIRST YEAR FOR PROCESSING IN TASMANIAN PLANT.

2. AMBASSADOR REVIEWED FOR ABBOTT OFFICIALS DEVELOPMENTS IN LOCAL POLITICAL SCENE AND CURRENT US-TURKISH RELATIONS WHICH MIGHT IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER HAVE A BEARING ON THE READINESS OF THE GOT TO CHOOSE A US FIRM FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROPOSED POPPY STRAW PROCESSING PLANT

IN TURKEY. THIS DISCUSSION COVERED SUCH FACTORS AS OUTCOME OF CURRENT GOVT CRISIS, POSSIBILITY OF EARLY ELECTIONS, GOT SENSITIVITY TO ANY APPEARANCE OF OUTSIDE PRESSURES PARTICULARLY FROM USG ON OPIUM QUESTION, CURRENT CYPRUS CRISIS, AND RECENT ACTION BY US CONGRESS REGARDING TERMINATION OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO TURKEY BY DEC 10. AMBASSADOR POINTED OUT THAT USG WOULD HAVE MUCH PREFERRED THAT GOT HAD CONTINUED COMPLETE BAN ON POPPY PRODUCTION, HOWEVER, DECISION WAS MADE BY GOT TO RESUME PRODUCTION AND IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT THIS CAN BE REVERSED IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE. THEREFORE, OUR CONCERN HAS SHIFTED TO SEEING THAT CONTROL SYSTEM IS AS EFFECTIVE AS POSSIBLE TO PREVENT LEAKAGE INTO ILLICIT TRAFFICKING. CONSEQUENTLY WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE POPPY STRAW PROCESS SUCCEED, SINCE IT OFFERS BETTER POSSIBILITY FOR EFFECTIVE CONTROL.

3. ABBOTT OFFICIALS EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR OPPORTUNITY TO CONSULT WITH AMBASSADOR AND FOR EMBASSY'S HAVING INTRODUCED MR. NELSON TWO WEEKS AGO TO MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICIALS CONCERNED WITH THIS MATTER. ABBOTT OFFICIALS RECOGNIZE TURKISH SENSITIVITY ON THIS SUBJECT AND DO NOT DESIRE FURTHER EMBASSY INTERVENTION WITH GOT AT PRESENT.

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4. MOSELEY, HOWEVER, WISHED EXPLORE POSSIBILITY OF SEVERAL TYPES OF ASSISTANCE BY USG:

A. HE INQUIRED ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF USG FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR CONSTRUCTION OF POPPY STRAW PROCESSING PLANT, PARTICULARLY IF ABBOTT SHOULD BE PERMITTED BY GOT TO HOLD MINORITY EQUITY SHARE.

WE POINTED OUT THAT TURKISH OFFICIALS HAVE ALREADY MADE CLEAR THAT BECAUSE OF SENSITIVITY ON THIS SUBJECT THEY DO NOT WISH OFFICIAL PARTICIPATION OR FINANCING BY OTHER GOVTS. HOWEVER, THEY ARE INTERESTED IN POSSIBILITY OF LOANS FROM INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

SUCH AS IBRD.

B. IN VIEW OF ATTITUDES IN US REGARDING NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING, ABBOTT BOARD OF DIRECTORS BEFORE HAVING ANYTHING TO DO WITH POPPY CULTIVATION IN TURKEY WOULD LIKE SOME INDICATION FROM US DEPARTMENT OF STATE THAT PARTICIPATION BY US FIRM IN TURKISH PROJECT IS NOT CONTRARY TO US POLICY AND IS, IN FACT, DESIRABLE FROM POINT OF VIEW OF US INTERESTS. AMBASSADOR SAID EMBASSY'S CONCERN IS THAT PROCESSING PLANT BE RUN EFFICIENTLY AND IN WAY TO AVOID LEAKAGE TO ILLICIT TRAFFIC. HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT ABBOTT HAS SKILLS AND TECHNOLOGY AND WOULD, AMONG OTHER FIRMS, BE ABLE TO DO THIS EFFECTIVELY. PROVIDED TURKS FROM POINT OF VIEW OF THEIR OWN POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES DID NOT OBJECT TO THE PARTICIPATION OF AN AMERICAN FIRM, HE PERSONALLY HAD NO OBJECTION. ON THE CONTRARY, IF THIS BUSINESS WAS TO BE GIVEN OUT HE WOULD PERSONALLY LIKE TO SEE AN AMERICAN FIRM GET A GOOD CRACK AT IT. THE AMBASSADOR ALSO SAID, HOWEVER, THAT A US FIRM MUST OF COURSE MAKE ITS OWN EVALUATION OF PUBLIC RELATIONS ASPECTS BACK IN US IF IT DECIDES TO BECOME INVOLVED IN PLANT OF THIS NATURE IN TURKEY. BEYOND THIS THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE COULD NOT GO. OBTAINING OF OFFICIAL STATEMENT AS TO WHETHER US GOVT WOULD LIKE US FIRM TO BE INVOLVED IS MATTER THAT ABBOTT OFFICIALS COULD BEST TAKE UP DIRECTLY WITH WASHINGTON OFFICIALS. HE SUGGESTED ABBOTT OFFICIALS DISCUSS THIS WITH AMBASSADOR VANCE WHO IS SENIOR ADVISER TO SECRETARY AND COORDINATOR FOR INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS MATTERS IN DEPT OF STATE. AMB VANCE IS FULLY CONVERSANT WITH ALL ASPECTS OF DEVELOPMENTS IN TURKEY REGARDING POPPY PRODUCTION. ABBOTT OFFICIALS SAID THEY WOULD PROBABLY GET IN TOUCH WITH AMB VANCE IN DECEMBER.

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C. ABBOTT OFFICIALS EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER US LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS WHICH PERMIT US PHARMACEUTICAL FIRMS ONLY TO IMPORT RAW OPIUM AND DO NOT PERMIT IMPORTATION OF OTHER PROCESSED DERIVATIVES. THEY WOULD LIKE ASSURANCE OF CHANGE IN THESE REGULATIONS TO PERMIT IM-

PORTATION OF PROCESSED ITEMS IF THEY ARE TO BECOME INVOLVED IN STRAW PROCESSING ABROAD. THEY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES A WAIVER CAN BE OBTAINED TO PERMIT IMPORTATION OF PRODUCTS. HOWEVER, THEY WOULD LIKE SOME MORE DEFINITE ASSURANCE REGARDING THE POSSIBILITY OF IMPORTING PROCESSED ITEMS INTO THE US BEFORE MAKING A COMMITMENT FOR AN INVESTMENT ABROAD. AMBASSADOR POINTED OUT THAT EMBASSY'S MAIN CONCERN IS WITH DEVELOPMENTS ON TURKISH SCENE TO ASSURE THAT EFFECTIVE CONTROLS ARE ADOPTED HERE TO PREVENT ILLICIT TRAFFIC. QUESTION OF CHANGE IN US REGULATIONS IS MATTER THAT ABBOTT OFFICIALS AND US INDUSTRY GENERALLY CAN BEST TAKE UP DIRECTLY IN US.

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